

LECTURE TOPICS: "NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY"
(By week: two lectures per week)

I. Secret Crises: the historical record of unannounced U.S. threats of, or preparations for imminent U.S. first-use of nuclear weapons.

Nixon's Vietnam strategy: the "secret plan...to end the war and win the peace"--by threats of escalation including possible use of nuclear weapons. 1969: the "madman theory" and the November ultimatum. 1972: the spring offensive, the December bombing.

The current record of earlier secret nuclear crises: Korea, 1950, 1953; Dienbienphu, 1954; Tachen Islands, 1955; (Guatemala, 1954? Lebanon, 1958?); Quemoy, 1958; Laos, 1961; Khe Sanh, 1968; Vietnam, 1964-65, 1967?), Korea, 1969. And "public nuclear crises": Berlin, 1961; Cuba, 1962; Middle East October War, 1973.

Why have the crises--in particular, the November ultimatum in 1969--not led to nuclear wars?

II. Strategic Bombing and the U.S. First Use of Nuclear Weapons. How economies, cities and whole populations came to be targets for mass destruction. From Rotterdam, Berlin, Coventry and Cologne to Hamburg, Dresden, Tokyo and Hiroshima. Decisions and nondecisions, alliance politics and atomic diplomacy that led to the use of fission weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki: the last shots of World War II or the first shots in the Cold War?

III. ~~The~~ Strangelove Era: the construction of the Doomsday Machine. U.S. strategic nuclear force posture and planning, from the H-bomb to the Cuban Missile Crisis. Bomber and missile gaps; counterforce doctrine; proposals and preparations for a U.S. first strike. BNSP, JSCP and SIOP. Delegation of authority to execute war plans. Khrushchev's bluff. Falling bombs.

IV. NATO Strategy: Alliance as Suicide Pact. The Western responses to Soviet conventional superiority (and to official exaggerations of it, along with underestimation of Soviet buildup of theater nuclear forces): the decision to build the H-bomb (with no attempt to forego it bilaterally); German rearmament; formal U.S. commitment to first-use and first-strike, "when necessary." Theories of and preparations for limited nuclear war and for limited strategic war, from Kissinger to Schlesinger and Brown.

V. The Machine Starts Countdown. The Cuban Missile Crisis, with its roots in the crises of 1961, Berlin and the Bay of Pigs. Kennedy's October Ultimatum: why it succeeded, how it could have failed (previously-undisclosed facts on losses of control by both sides, unknown to one or both parties at the time).

VI. Strategic Terrorism: U.S. Bombing Strategy in Vietnam. "...the will of the DRV as the real target"; "water-drip" technique; "one more turn of the screw": the paradigm of torture. Dams and dikes as targets in Korea and Vietnam. Underlying options, from 1961 on: invasion of North Vietnam, ~~xxx~~ population bombing, destruction of dikes, confrontation and detente with Russia and China, nuclear weapons. Johnson's ultimatum, 1964, and the Tonkin Gulf crisis; escalation after 1969. The need for secrecy at home; the Bill of Rights and the anti-war movement as obstacles to success; the road to Watergate and the ending of the bombing and the war.

VII. U.S. foreign policy in the Third World, and its relation to NATO strategy. A new look at "revisionist" versus orthodox theories in the light of the experience of Vietnam, revelations on U.S. covert operations, and the secret aspects of preparations for nuclear war.

VIII. The Neutron Bomb: a case study. The manipulation of public discussion; a close look at the debate. Characteristics of a weapon preeminently ~~adapted~~ adapted to kill people, who do not possess means of nuclear retaliation, contrasted to ~~its~~ its universal public image of an anti-tank weapon exclusively against Soviet forces in Europe. The enhanced ~~xxxxxxx~~ radiation warheads as first-use-only weapons, whose effects will be felt mainly in the Third World, thereby commencing the global era (if it does not begin otherwise) of routine combat use of nuclear weapons. Evidence of Carter's reaffirmation of the U.S. policy of readiness for first-use.

IX. U.S. First Strike Capabilities in the 1980's. The Russian strategic and tactical buildup, and its implications for U.S. retaliatory, first strike, and first-use tactical capabilities. Alternative interpretations of the Soviet programs, and alternative U.S. responses. The implications of current U.S. weapons development programs--Trident, cruise missiles, Missile X, Mark 12A warhead, enhanced radiation ~~xxx~~ warheads, and antisubmarine warfare systems--for various U.S. capabilities and for underlying policy. The relation of a "not incredible first-strike capability" to a policy using first-use threats or limited nuclear operations.

X. Will we survive our defense? Alternatives to the arms race and proliferation, to SALT and to the current weapons programs on all sides. Lessons from the movements against testing, the Vietnam war, nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. Prospects for a future markedly different from the mutual policies of the last 30 years. I.e., prospects for a future.